

MAR 11 2004



Department of Water Resources

Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs

March 1, 2004

Karl Dreher, Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
1301 North Orchard St.
Boise, ID 83706

Dear Mr. Dreher:

Washington State University is writing this letter regarding the interstate groundwater management issue relating to the Palouse Basin Aquifer that serves the Pullman, Moscow, Whitman and Latah County areas. We are deeply concerned over the recent events regarding involvement of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) in local ground water issues.

We understand that IDWR is charged with evaluating a petition to designate the Idaho portions of the Grande Rhonde Aquifer as a Critical Groundwater Management Area and the Wanapum Aquifer as a Groundwater Management Area. As a result of these designations, IDWR would become more involved in the management of the Palouse Basin Aquifer by removing management issues from local control. We urge that IDWR take no action toward this request and leave the management of the water resource in the hands of the local agencies and Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC).

Washington State University is very involved and pleased with the local efforts underway to manage the local aquifer, stabilize pumping, and explore opportunities to stabilize and recharge water levels in the aquifer. We are an active participant in these efforts as an agency and member of PBAC. The area has made substantial progress towards achieving these aims:

- PBAC and the local agencies adopted a ground water management plan in 1992.
- Pumping rates have been stabilized for the four major Grande Rhonde water users.
- Recent research data is showing the rate of aquifer decline has substantially decreased.
- Conservation efforts are being enacted with the citizens and the agencies.
- Washington State University and the City of Pullman have requested state funding to construct a wastewater reclamation facility. The reclaimed water will be used in the city and on campus for irrigation.

This interstate and interagency cooperation is unique. The local agencies and PBAC are quite capable of supplying the cooperative effort to address deep aquifer use and recharge.

Thank you for consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Greg Royer", written over a horizontal line.

Greg Royer
Vice President for Business Affairs

cc: V. Lane Rawlins
Ev Davis
Rob Corcoran
University of Idaho Interim President Gary Michael
Pullman Mayor Glenn Johnson
Pullman City Councilmembers
Moscow Mayor Marshall H. Comstock
Moscow City Councilmembers
Whitman County Commissioners
Latah County Commissioners
Colfax Mayor Norma Becker
Larry Kirkland, PBAC